

FWP COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

Meeting Date: December 8, 2011

Agenda Item: Proposed 2012–2013 Migratory Bird Regulations

Division: Wildlife

Action Needed: Approval of Proposed Rule

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 20 minutes

Background: Migratory bird hunting regulations pertain to cranes, snipe, ducks, geese, swans, and coots. Montana participates in both the Central and Pacific Flyways and adheres to the federal frameworks established by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service in cooperation with the flyway councils. Frameworks that include season dates and bag limits are not finalized until late summer. States may be more conservative than these frameworks—to include local area closures—but may not exceed them. The inclusion here of migratory bird regulations in this biennial season setting process expands public process for season elements that may be adopted at this time pending confirmation or finalization of Federal frameworks later this summer. For the 2012 and 2013 migratory bird regulations, proposed changes are listed below.

A proposed new limited permit area for Rocky Mountain Population Sandhill cranes in Broadwater County AND a proposed expansion in the limited permit area for Rocky Mountain Population Sandhill cranes to include Golden Valley County along with Wheatland, Meagher and a portion of Sweetgrass counties.

A proposed increase in the Central Flyway dark goose daily bag limit from 4 to 5 birds.

A proposed increase in the Central Flyway white goose daily bag limit from 6 to 20 birds AND a proposed increase in the Pacific Flyway white goose daily bag limit from 6 to 10.

Public Involvement Process & Results: Migratory bird season comments were received during scoping and included an interest in additional opportunity for hunting geese, particularly in the Central Flyway. In addition to public comment at the Dec. 8 Commission meeting, public comment will run thru 5:00 PM Monday, Jan. 23, 2012. Any final adoptions will take place at the Feb. 16, 2012 Commission meeting.

Alternatives and Analysis: Proposals may be adopted as proposed, with adjustment, with additions, with deletions or no change from 2011 (status quo). No change would challenge the supporting justifications behind proposals.

Agency Recommendation & Rationale: Additional information for individual proposals have been included in Commission information packets and may be further articulated at the Dec. 8 Commission meeting.

Proposed Motion: I move the Commission adopt the 2012 and 2013 Migratory Bird Hunting Regulations as proposed by FWP and pending compliance with Federal frameworks.